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This month

Office bearers of the Seafood Exporters Association of India 2001-2002 3

Food experts cite 10 consumer trends to watch 7
Five on the list stand out as opportunity for the seafood industry. A report

From our President 9
The 31st Annual General Meeting of the Seafood Exporters Association of India was held on 15th September, 2001. The report of the Managing Committee presented by the President Elias Sait.

FDA more concerned about seafood safety 19
The US Food and Drug Administration is increasingly concerned about controls of pathogens in cooked products. FDA notes.

Principles for food import, export inspection and certification 23
Officially recognised inspection and certification system are fundamentally important means of food control. A paper on definitions and principles.

Customers health and safety are in your hands 27
Consumers trust that the nation's food handlers and manufacturers are doing everything to protect them from food borne illness.

Ministry of Commerce issues the final order on MRL for antibiotics 29

WTO and Globalization 35
Frequently asked questions and answers.

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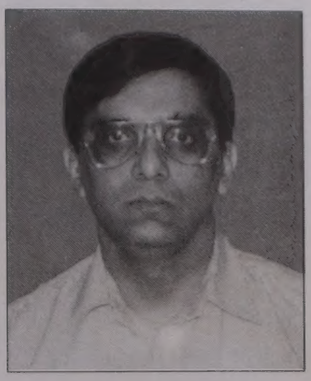

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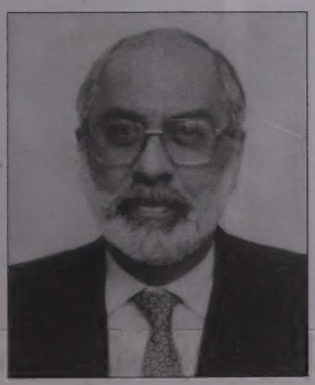

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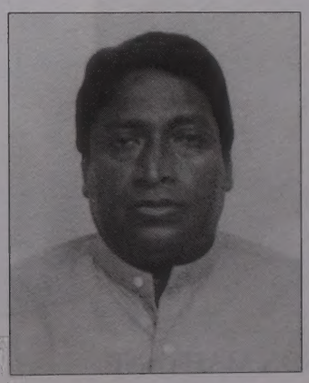

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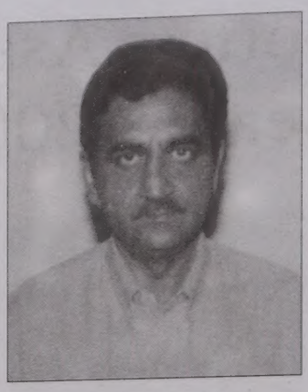

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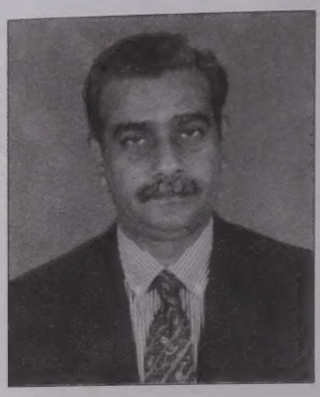

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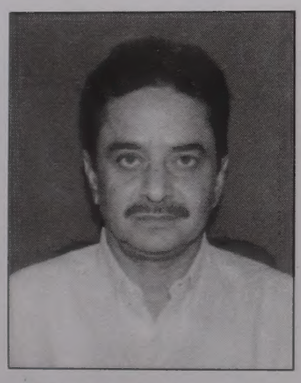

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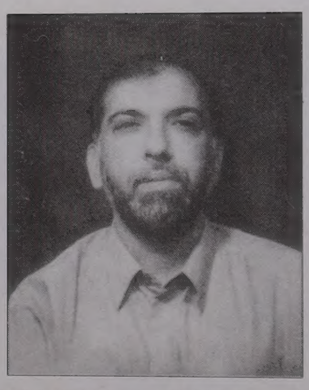

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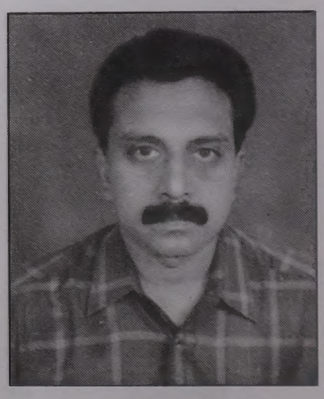

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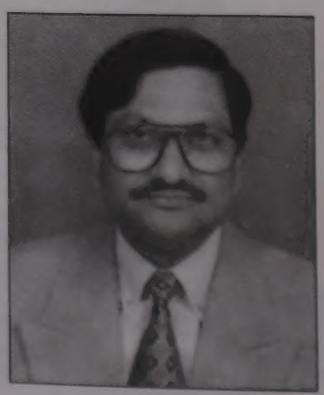

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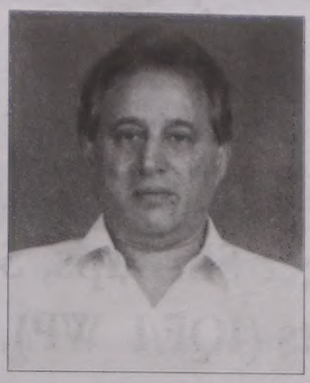

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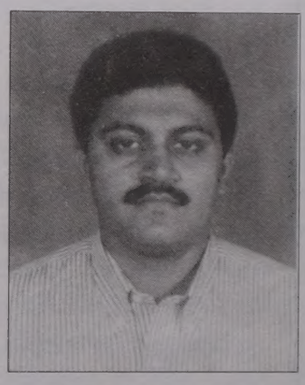

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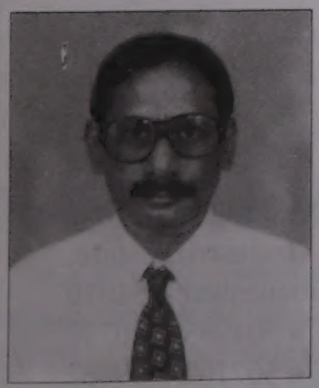

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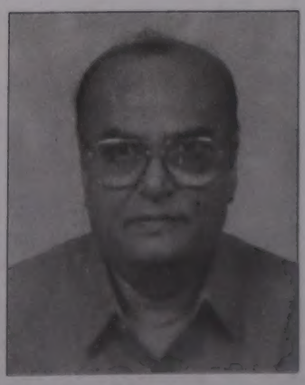

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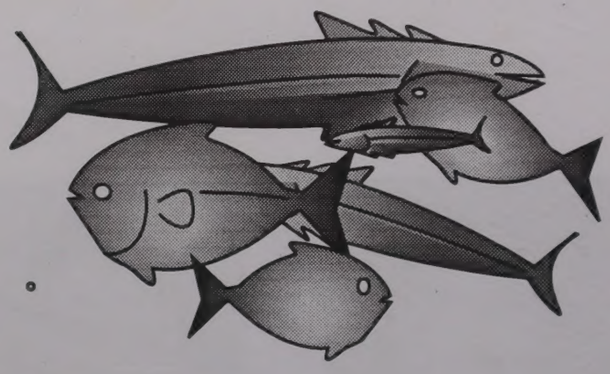

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Food experts cite 10 consumer trends to watch

Five on the list stand out as opportunities for the seafood industry

Lisa Duchene

The latest list of Top 10 Trends from the Institute of Food Technologists portrays American consumers with sophisticated palates but little time, and with a desire for balance, sometimes selecting healthful foods and other times opting for indulgence. Their food must be ultra-fresh, but also super easy, both to prepare and to eat.

"Anything goes!" writes Elizabeth Sloan, president of Sloan Trends & Solutions and author of the Top 10 article that appeared in the April issue of Food Technology. "It's a trend-trackers' nightmare and marketer's dream!"

For seafood companies, five key themes on the trend list could add up to big opportunities.

Sophistication

Most of the nation's 78 million Baby Boomers consider themselves "foodies" and make up the most culinarily literate generation in history, says Sloan. Research indicates consumers across the board are more willing to experiment with new cuisines and flavors. "Fresh-Mex," the second most popular restaurant ethnic cuisine, is spurring strong popularity of shrimp fajitas, quesadillas and fish tacos, reports Sloan.

Do-it-yourself health

This is a huge opportunity for the seafood industry to capitalize on the benefits of omega-3 fatty acids in fish. Americans are looking to fortified foods to enhance their health, prevent disease and slow aging. Nearly three-quarters of supermarket shoppers use fortified foods to maintain health.

Many retailers are responding by turning their stores into health centres, cross-merchandising prescription drugs with organic and functional foods and offering services like blood-pressure screening.

This is the most important trend for the seafood industry, says Phil Lempert, trend analyst and editor of The Lempert Report and supermarketguru.com. It's a way traditional supermarkets can compete with Wal-Mart and Target, he says.

Simple cooking at home

Consumers still prefer to eat at home, but very few are cooking from scratch. Instead, they are saving steps with pre-marinated or pre-cut proteins. They are also keeping preparation simple, adding a pre-mixed seasoning or sauce to a chop, fillet or breast. In frozen foods, the strongest growth category behind single meals is frozen commodities like chicken, shrimp and fish.

"There seems to be a movement for the freezer to become America's pantry," says Sloan.

Sales of frozen unbreaded shrimp for the first five months of this year were up 23 per cent over the same period in 2000: unbreaded fish sales were up 21.6 per cent, according to Nielsen data. There is a lot of room for growth in plain, frozen seafood, says Sloan.

Fresh and Pure

Ninety-three per cent of consumers polled feel it is important for grocery stores to have the freshest possible food. Seafood sellers must deliver superior products to meet consumer's expectations of quality.

Convenience

Meal preparation and food that lets you drive or work while eating are the latest twists on the convenience trend. There is greater demand for oven-prepared meals than for stovetop meals that must be tended, says Sloan, and greater demand for hand-held food on a stick or in a bag. Sales of hand-held fodos are projected to reach $2 billion by next year, according to Kalorama Information.

Seafood companies like Contessa and PanaPesca are creating products aimed at meeting consumer needs for convenience.

Contessa last year launched a "Meal Solutions" line of frozen vegetables combined with chicken, shrimp or beef that can be stir-fried. The "complete meal" category is performing well, says Robert Sigur, Contessa's head of corporate development.

PanalPesca says both retail and foodservice sales are strong for its frozen, vac-packed, pre-cooked hardshell clams and mussels. the product is user-friendly: six minutes in boiling water yields a meal.

But is the industry as a whole capitalizing on consumer trends?

In some ways, says Smithson. Just think about the number of shrimp variations available popcorn to jumbo, and flavors like Cajun, teriyaki and coconut.

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From our President...

On behalf of the Managing Committee of the Seafood Exporters Association of India, it gives me great pleasure and privilege in presenting the 31st Annual Report of the Association for the year 2000-2001 with the audited Balance Sheet and Income & Expenditure statement for the period ended 31st March 2001.

Year Under Report

MEMBERSHIP

Membership of the association stands today as follows:

Kerala	103
Tamil Nadu	28
Andhra Pradesh	76
Maharastra	36
Gujarath	39
Karnatka/Goa	14
West Bengal	17
Orissa	19
Total	333

Mr. K.P. Thomas	Gujarat
Mr. Gul. R. Kripalani	Maharastra
Mr. K.H. Saleem	Karnataka
Mr. Jose Thomas	Kerala
Mr. D.B.R. Reddy	Tamil Nadu
Mr. Y. Surya Rao	Andhra Pradesh
Mr. R. N. Misra	Orissa
Mr. R. Bhattacharrya	West Bengal

The National Managing Committee consists of 25 members. Each region is having representatives as under

Gujarat	3
Maharastra	3
Karnataka	2
Kerala	5
Tamil Nadu	3
Andhra Pradesh	4
Orissa	2
West Bengal	3
Total	25

As mentioned during last year, a lot of correction has taken place in the Membership and you will note in few of the regions the membership has dropped. During the current year, more corrections will be taking place and the list will be representative of a really operative membership

REGIONAL OFFICES

We have Regional Offices at Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh West Bengal, Karnataka, Orissa, Maharastra and a Regional President as under heads each region.

The Managing Committee has met seven times during last year and has evolved into an effective body for dealing with the issues of the Trade. More effective participation of the Committee Members has been observed and is now truly reflect the democratic approach of this Association. I should thank the Vice Presidents Mr.Kunjumoideen and Mr.Tara Patnaik and also all the Managing Committee Members for rendering their effective support and participation. A particular mention has to be made by the Committee of the role played by Mr.Ranjit Bhattacharya, the President of the West

Species	Quantity (MT)	%	Value (USD in Mil)	%
Shrimps – Cultured	23477	5.33	292.93	20.68
Shrimps – Others	88397	20.07	692.07	48.87
Cuttlefish	33677	7.65	63.52	4.48
Squids	37628	8.54	71.31	5.03
Fishes	212903	48.34	192.25	13.57
Others	44391	10.07	104.24	7.37
TOTAL	440473		1416.32	

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Bengal Region and the Vice Chairman of MPEDA in coordinating on critical issues of the Reconstruction Fund and the technical requirements of the Trade.

A view of the dias. From left to right: Tara Ranjan Patnaik (Vice President), Gul Kripalani (President, Maharashtra), Abraham J. Tharakan (President, Kerala), Elias Sait (President), K.A. Kunjumoideen (Vice President), R. Bhattacharya (President, West Bengal) and Y. Surya Rao (President, A.P.)

EXPORT PERFORMANCE

The year witnessed a record export figure of USD 1416.32 million, resulting in an export figure of Rs.6443.89 crores. There has been an increase of 28.41% in quantity and 25.94% in value (19.12% in Dollar terms & 25.94% in Rupee terms). The contributions of the various items are as follows:

You would find from the above that the contribution of the Aquaculture has been more significant. The growth may indicate a rosy picture, but it is not really so. The problem of the Trade still continues and of particular worry is the dwindling catches from the ocean resources. Industry has to pay attention as to how this can be conserved and corrected for an increase in the future.

The total export during this period is 440473 MT while it was 343031 MT during April-March 1999-2001. Japan continues to be the top buyer of Indian seafood this year also. This accounts for 39.73%. USA is the second largest buyer of Indian seafood. This accounts for 18.07%. Frozen shrimp is again the major item of our marine product export during this financial years also contributing to 69.55%. The second major item is Frozen finfish. This accounts for 13.57%. [In value terms Chennai is on the top of export activities with its share of 27.41%. But in quantity terms, Cochin Port is on the higher side with its share of 20.06%].

China has emerged as the major buyer of the Indian Seafood especially low value item. 41.94% of India's seafood in quantity term exported to China. During the financial year India has exported 182771 MT of seafood products to China registered an increase of 70.6% in Quantity terms.

TRADE ISSUES

a. Fall in Current years' exports:

During the current year, the start has been pretty disappointing. For the first 4 months, ending July '01, the exports have dropped in value in dollar terms by over 10%, though the quantities have increased marginally. The main reason for this fall is the steep drop in market price of over 35% for both cultured and ocean products. Such a drop had a serious impact on the operational viability of the fishermen and the trawler operators. In many of the coastal areas, fishing has virtually come to a halt and the social situation is growing worse amongst the fishermen. The enthusiasm of the aquaculture farmers also has been seriously dampened by such a fall in prices and there is an apprehension that the aquaculture activity may get stagnated or may even get reduced.

Everyone is hoping that there will be a turnaround in prices. But the economic indicators of the importing countries do not send positive signals. The government is being kept appraised of these developments and efforts are being taken by the Trade to get all the support necessary for our Trade, which is already bereft with serious carry-over problems of the past

	Present Situation	Proposed Duty structure	Additional Duty
Raw Frozen Shrimps (Code: 0306 2390)			
Full duties	12.0%	12.0%	
With GSP	(12.0% x 0.35) 4.2%	(12.0% - 3.5%) 8.5%	4.3%
Cooked/Peeled – Processed Shrimps (Code: 1605 20)			
Full duties	20.0%	20.0%	
With GSP	(20.0% x 0.25) 7.0%	(20.0% - 3.5%) 16.5%	9.5%

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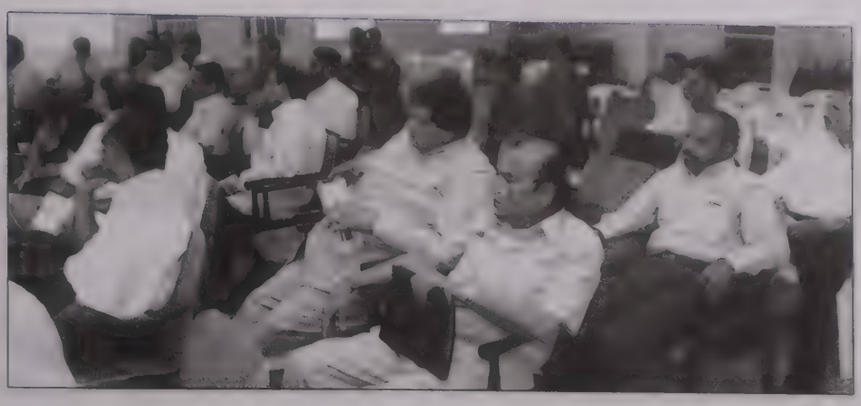
The industry's capacity to absorb such shocks is almost nil. As already expressed in the last Annual Report, even in good situations, the business sense of making profit has been absent in many a case in our industry. Unless, this factor is seriously addressed by every member of the Association, it would be difficult or almost impossible for the existing players to survive.



A view of the audience

b. The new GSP tariff:

We are faced with a serious problem, which is likely to come up with the European Commission relating to the new scheme of GSP, which could totally stop our exports to Europe since the decision is likely to be taken in October in EEC for implementation from 1st January 2002. The industry is particularly worried about the possible serious negative consequences of this proposal on the Marine Products exports from our country to EEC.

A brief overview of the Proposal and its impact on the import duties applicable in the EEC market is as follows:

A great number of supplying countries do – and will still – enjoy total exemption, or great reduction of import duties, under a variety of special regimes:

Least Developed Countries like Bangladesh - '0%' duty

ACP Countries, particularly in Africa - '0%' duty

Drug Fighting Countries (Equador, Venezuela, Honduras, Panama, etc.) - '3.6%' duty for Raw Shrimps &

- '0%' duty for Prepared Shrimps

Countries like Bangladesh and Africa will have a very big advantage over us. Bangladesh will dominate the Black Tiger and Fresh Water supplies to EEC with an advantage of 8.5%. Indian Black Tiger & Scampi can never be exported to EEC in the face of such an onslaught.

Also, re-processors within Europe who buy raw shrimps at a duty of 8.5% and convert it into cooked product will have an advantage of more than 8% over the Indian value added product exporter. This will be a serious hamper to the value added efforts of the country.

Over all, it is very clear that the future exports to EEC, if this proposed legislation is made final, will be seriously affected. Ultimately, this market may be closed to us.

The issue has been taken up with the Commerce Ministry and also action is being taken through the Commerce Secretary and the Commerce Minister to send a delegation immediately to negotiate with the EEC.

c. Panic caused by EEC rejections:

During the last year and also during the current year, there have been a few rejections in some of the EEC ports of the Indian product. As a percentage, this works out to less than 0.25% of our total exports to Europe. This is far lesser than a normal rejection percentage from any other country. Though the EEC authorities themselves have been intimating about these rejections, in a matter of fact manner, the reaction of the Trade officers of the Indian Government in Europe has been very panicky and the problem has been grossly over-stated. As a result, the Authorities in India have been pressurized to take steps, which are far more than what is warranted in trying to correct the situation. This is having a negative effect on the industry as any over reaction results in escalation of costs and also the workability of the product.

Despite the huge investment in upgrading the infrastructure of the processors and exporters, both within the processing plants and in the transportation and handling of the material, the Trade is being put under more and more pressure for every rejection that is intimated by EEC to our authorities. EEC itself is not taking the action of banning any exporter of marine products from India despite such rejection. The only action they take is to put such an exporter in the 'Alert List'. If 10 consecutive consignments are cleared without any problem, he is put back on the normal list. It is true that even in countries like USA, Japan and other places a similar procedure exists. Therefore, this panic reaction of the Government authorities has to be seriously discussed and addressed. This work has already been taken up and serious dialogue is taking place with the Government. The Trade is insisting that the Government should now work out a protocol with the EEC countries and discuss the EEC norms, which are applicable realistically on infrastructure and other points for imports from India and other countries. There should be an objective discussion, without a fear of losing this market, as the Trade has lost out very heavily in the past on the Indian Government authorities accepting everything that the foreign authorities say without a window for appeal or discussion. The members should be prepared for taking a strong stand on such an

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issue and should not be worried of the risk of losing this market.

d. Non-EU units on non-integrated pre-processing centers and ice plants:

The approval for units exporting to non-EU countries, under the revised guidelines, which were established two years ago and for the implementation of which the Trade has been getting extension of time was finally implemented and completed by March this year.

A view of the audience

Such an implementation programme, does not cover the non-integrated pre-processing centers and ice plants of some of the non-EU facilities. The ground reality of the pre-processing or the peeling activity for this Trade exists in the material being peeled outside the processing plants and being sourced from peeling sheds located in different parts of the town or city. Such peeling sheds, which are run by a separate segment of the industry over the last few decades do not meet the standards of either non-EU or EU requirements, as prescribed.

The responsibility for bringing such an activity also in line with the requirements prescribed does not lie only with the exporters or the processors. This responsibility, the Trade has been insisting, has to be taken up by the Monitoring Agencies like Export Inspection Council and the MPEDA. Towards this effort, MPEDA has now agreed that such facilities, which are set up by this segment of the business would also be subsidized out of the MPEDA Subsidy Schemes. The dialogue has been initiated by MPEDA with this segment of the industry in Cochin. The response seems to be encouraging.

However, these efforts and actions would take time and they should not come in the way of giving approvals to the plants with non-integrated pre-processing facilities. As a result of the representation of the Trade, the Government has given extension for such approvals upto 30th September 2001 and further extension is being pursued.

The industry recognizes the importance of getting this pre-processing activity also organized as per the requirements of the various importing countries. Serious effort, attention and co-operation is required from the pre-processing segment, MPEDA, EIA and also from our Members. It would take atleast a year to put the things in proper shape. This issue is being discussed with the Commerce Ministry and the right perspective is being explained to the authorities concerned.

e. Exim Policy:

Government of India has announced the EXIM POLICY during April 2001 and has cut down the DEPB incentives to 4%. This is a severe blow to the marine product export business. Though we have made several representations through our Association, we are yet to get a favourable reply from the authorities.

Duty Draw Back rate is being worked out for the industry.

f. Aquaculture Bill:

Parliamentary Standing Committee on Aquaculture has cleared and given recommendation for the Aquaculture Bill. Now the bill is under the consideration of the Cabinet for placing it before the Parliament

g. Status of the Reconstruction Fund:

The Reconstruction Fund has been cleared in-principle by the Commerce Minister. The final recommendations and clearance of the Commerce Ministry for this Fund is being forwarded to the Finance Ministry. The Finance Ministry will study this and discuss with the Commerce Ministry and then workout the methodology for clearance of this Fund. The clearance by the Commerce Ministry for this Programme has taken more than a year. This was the main task. The process with the Finance Ministry may take another 2-3 months. After this, the methodology for the issue of bonds and notification for the Cess and the monitoring of the usage have to be worked out. It may take another one month. This entire process would therefore take at least 4 months.

h. Relationship with and support of MPEDA:

The industry has been working very closely with MPEDA and the co-operation has been on very healthy lines. The Trade members on the MPEDA Authority, headed by the Vice Chairman, have been seriously pursuing the objectives of the SEAI. As a result, the amount of subsidies released last year for our industry has been nearly Rs.11 crores. This is a record. The subsidies are now being cleared quickly and all the regions have been satisfied on this aspect. Every matter, which is discussed by the SEAI Management Committee, is pursued through the MPEDA authority, whether it be related to infrastructure, export inspection issues, trade problems like GSP and other issues and also the pursuit of the Reconstruction Fund, has all been very closely worked out with the Chairman,

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Mr. Prem Kallat Chief Executive	:	Tel. Off Mobile	: (044) 5342261 : 98400 59990	Res : (044) 8553981 Dir : (044) 5341817

MPEDA and all the Members of the Authority. The support from MPEDA has definitely been very appreciative during the last year.

i. Fishermen Welfare Fund:

After a very appreciative and relentless pursuit of the Members of the Association of the Kerala Region, a much reduced percentage (0.5%) of charge towards Fishermen Welfare Fund has been crystallized. This would be of great relief for the members of the Kerala Association. A reasonable time schedule has also been worked out and also accepted for the dues of the past. All the Office Bearers and the members of the Kerala Region will have to get the credit for such a united achievement.

j. India International Seafood Show:

The India International Seafood Show was held for the first time in its history in Andhra Pradesh at Visakhapatnam from 9th to 11th February 2001. The Show was a tremendous success with the participation of 84 foreign delegates and 518 Indian delegates. 138 stalls were put up. The Show was inaugurated by Shri.M.Venkaiah Naidu, Hon'ble Union Minister for Rural Development and was presided over by Shri.Prabir Sengupta, Commerce Secretary. The other dignitaries who addressed the Show were Shri. Vadde Sobhanadeeswara Rao, Hon'ble Minister for Agriculture & Horticulture, Andhra Pradesh; Shri.Ch. Ayyanna Patrudu, Hon'ble Minister for Forest & Environment, Science & Technology, Govt. of Andhra Pradesh; Shri. M.V.V.S.Murthi, Hon'ble Member of Parliament; Shri.N.Narasimha Rao, Hon'ble Minister for B.C.Welfare & Fisheries, Govt. of Andhra Pradesh.

The Show honoured the leading importers of Japan, USA and Europe. Very well organized seminars were conducted and the response was more than expected. Good entertainment programmes were held, along with dinners. The Show was very well appreciated by the foreign delegates, Indian exporters, farmers and all the segments of the Trade.

For the first time in its history, all the segments of the Trade viz. the Exporters, Processors, Association of Indian Fishery Industries, Association of Shrimp Hatchery Owners & Shrimp Aquaculture Farmers and other segments of the Trade jointly conducted this Show and made it a huge success. Every Member of our Association has to be thanked for making this Show a success. Particular appreciation is due to Mr.Y.Surya Rao, President of the Andhra Pradesh Region and his entire team and the members of the Andhra Pradesh Region.

k. Aroor Project Status:

The work on the Aroor Project, being set up by MPEDA in association with KINFRA and SEAI, has commenced. The project should be completed within the next one year and completion of this project is being watched very keenly by other regions for setting up similar facilities in their regions.

l. Seafood Export Journal:

The Seafood Export Journal published by the Association continues to be popular amongst members of the Seafood Industry and its allied industries and various educational and Scientific Institutions. The Journal enjoys wide circulation both nationally and internationally. Mr. Norbert Karikkasserry has been successfully managing the publication with the full co-operation and support of the editorial Board.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The managing committee would like to take this opportunity to express its deep sense of gratitude to the Hon'ble Commerce Minister Mr.Murasoli Maran, Commerce Secretary Mr.Prabir Sengupta, the Joint Secretary Mr.M.V.P.C.Sastry for having extended their best support to the industry. We extend a special thanks and appreciation for the efforts of Shri.Bharath Bhushan, the erstwhile Joint Secretary for being helpful to the industry with his very practical and helpful attitude in solving many a problem of this industry. The entire team of officials in the Ministry of Commerce, Revenue, Agricultural, Food Processing, were always helpful to the industry. We record our heartfelt thanks to these Officials.

We would also like to thank Mr.K. Jose Cyriac, IAS, Chairman MPEDA and his entire team for their wholehearted support extended to the trade. Special thanks is due to Mr.V.Venkatesan, Director, MPEDA, who retired on 31st May 2001, for the years of dedicated service and sincere efforts rendered to our industry.

We would like to thank the Director, Export Inspection Council of India, Ms. Sashi Sareen and her entire team for their support rendered to the industry. We also thank all the Export Inspection Agency officials and their team throughout the country.

A special word of thanks is due to IIM Calcutta and Dr. H. Bhattacharya, Professor Banking and Finance.

We also would like to place on record our heartfelt thanks for the assistance received from Port Trust, Custom Department, Shipping Companies, financial Institutions and the various central and State Authorities, Research Institutions like CIFNET, CMFRI, FSI, IFP and the Fisheries Department.

We are particularly obliged to the Press and the various media for their service and support and we look forward for their continued patronage to our Association.

We also like to express our deep gratitude to all the individuals and institution that have either directly or indirectly contributed to the welfare of

Continued on page 40

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FDA more concerned about seafood safety

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is increasingly concerned about controls for pathogens beyond sanitation that may be applied to products that are intended to be cooked. This problem requires more attention because of the trend toward more partially cooked seafood and the large number of detentions for Salmonella in products; about 100 firms are on automatic detention and seven countries are on automatic detention. FDA is increasing surveillance of imported foods through inspection of foreign plants and increased sampling of imported products at entry. At the present time, FDA only samples about two to three percent of imported foods. FDA has initiated a comprehensive program to minimize pathogens on aquaculture product. (See article FDA Begins Aquaculture Study.)

FDA Begins Aquaculture Study

In August, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) started a comprehensive Good Aquaculture Practices (GAP) program. The objective of the program is to produce a factual report on the possible sources of microbiological and chemical contamination at aquaculture sites and provide proactive assistance to aquaculture farms to enable production of safer farm raised shrimp and decrease the number of import detentions, alerts and illness outbreaks.

FDA has established a general study protocol and is working with governments, academia, industry and other cooperators in carrying out the study. The countries proposed for the GAP program study are: Nicaragua, India, Vietnam, Brazil, Ecuador, Thailand and the USA. In each country nine farm sites of different production levels will be sampled. Microbiological and chemical samples will be collected and analyzed and additional information will be obtained from interviews at each site. The anonymity of information and samples will be insured by using a code for different facilities and processors cooperating in the study.

The results of the GAP program study will:

Determine what practices and controls at the farm result in minimizing, reducing, or eliminating the presence of salmonella or pathogen indicators in ponds, meats, sediments, etc.

Determine conversely, what practices and controls result in the presence of salmonella or pathogen indicators in ponds, meats, sediments, etc.

Provide the scientific basis for materials incorporated into a training course on GAPs for the aquaculture farmer.

Allow a comparison across different geographical areas of the presence of salmonella or pathogen indicators and pesticides and herbicides in aquaculture sites.

Provide a preliminary comparison of salmonella serotypes found in aquaculture sites and their products from around the world to serotypes known to cause human illnesses.

The GAP program was started because of increasing evidence that aquaculture seafood may need additional controls at the farm level to reduce or minimize the risk of food borne illnesses. Concern about outbreaks of salmonellosis illnesses from aquaculture shrimp has shown that cooking cannot always be relied on as the sole measure to control microbial pathogens. The percentage of salmonella found on farmraised seafood is much greater than that for wild caught seafood. Remedies to effectively decrease potential hazards introduced during the growth and harvest phases of production for farmraised seafood should enhance the effectiveness of FDA's seafood HACCP program, according to the FDA GAP program proposal. A copy of the GAP program can be obtained by email from U.S. Seafood News.

FDA Solicits Comments on Import Tolerances for Drugs

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA), published in the Federal Register of August 10, 2001, a notice that it is soliciting comment on issues related to the implementation of the import tolerances provision in section 4 of the Animal Drug Availability Act of 1996 (ADAA). The ADAA authorizes FDA to establish drug residue tolerances (import tolerances) for imported food products of animal origin for drugs that are used in other countries, but that are

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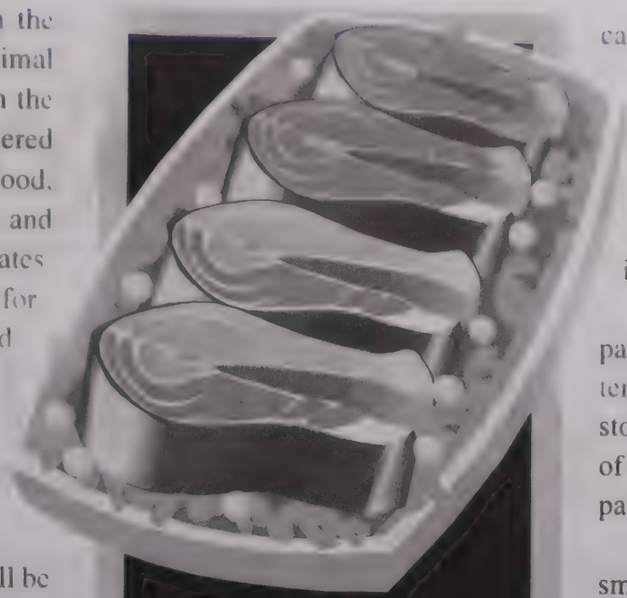
unapproved new animal drugs in the United States. Food products of animal origin that are in compliance with the import tolerance will not be considered adulterated under the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (the act) and may be imported into the United States FDA plans to propose a regulation for establishing import tolerances and to hold a public meeting on import tolerances during the comment period for this advance notice of proposed rule making (ANPRM). Comments made at the meeting and in response to this ANPRM will be considered in writing the proposed regulation. FDA will work with the Food Safety Inspection Service of the United States Department of Agriculture and other Federal agencies in the development of the proposed regulation. Comments must be submitted on or before October 3, 2001. The Federal Register notice may be viewed on: www.gpo.gov/ and click on Federal Register.



The warning letters continue to focus on high risk products with emphasis on scombroid species and histamine, crab processing, smoked fish and sampling aquaculture fish for drugs and chemicals.

FDA Warning Letters Increase

In July the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issued 28 warning letters for failure to meet HACCP and sanitation requirements, bringing the total number of warning letters issued for the first seven months of 2001 to 140. The Seattle and New Orleans offices issued six warning letters each, Atlanta issued four, Florida, New York and New Jersey issued two each, and New England, Cincinnati, Detroit, Chicago, Baltimore and San Francisco issued one each.

The warning letters continued to focus on high risk products with emphasis on scombroid species and histamine, crab processing, smoked fish and sampling aquaculture fish for drugs and chemicals. All of the warning letters were for U.S. processors on the mainland or in Guam. Our analysis showed the following:

Twelve letters contained citations for insufficient controls for histamine. Examples of problems were that the critical limit exceeded 40°F at receiving or in storage, monitoring was inadequate and corrective actions were either not taken or were insufficient. We also found that in one case, in addition to a temperature of 40°F, a secondary processor was required to show that product was under control during transportation by checking for "adequacy and presence of cooling media at time of delivery or by obtaining documentation of continuous monitoring during transport of each shipment". One firm's vessel harvest record was inadequate and, according to the warning letter, the harvest record must include, at a minimum: information on method of capture, date and time of landing, estimated time of death, method of cooling, date and time cooling began, a notation if sea and air temperature is greater than 83°F and a notation that the fish were placed on ice within 12 hours of death.

Five letters were concerned with pathogens in crab processing; improper temperature controls in the picking and storage area and improper monitoring of the cooking process were the principal problems cited.

Three letters were concerned with smoked fish; insufficient water phase salt and improper monitoring were the principal problems cited.

Thirteen of the letters were concerned with lack of sufficient sanitation controls ranging from insufficient sanitation monitoring to insanitary conditions, including crosscontamination, dirty equipment, and condensate dripping on product, etc.

Other problems cited were not maintaining sufficient temperature in oyster shell stock to guard against vibrio, not checking for drugs and chemicals at receiving point in catfish, listeria in cooked shrimp, and labeling for allergens and sulfites.

New FDA Dietary Supplement and Food Labeling Newsletter

The Office of Nutritional Products, Labeling, and Dietary Supplements, located in the Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition, FDA, has announced its new electronic newsletter, "FDADSFL" (Dietary Supplement/ Food Labeling Electronic Newsletter), which will publish on a quarterly basis, or as needed. The goal is to provide interested parties with access to key information and updates about regulatory actions related to food labeling, nutrition, and dietary supplements, as well as educational materials and important announcements.

Our Secret Recipe for Quality

A Government of India recognised export house since 1988, today our brands like Akasaka, Nekkanti, Roppongi, Akasaka Special and Nekkanti Star. are well established in the Global Markets. Our Products range presents a varied menu for discerning buyers as shrimp, lobsters, cuttle fish, squid, crabs, king/fin fish, pomfret and snappers. Our exports to countries such as Japan, U.S.A., Australia, Singapore, Belgium, Spain, Malaysia, Italy and Netherlands have helped us achieve a phenomenal growth. It isn't a surprise that we have been awarded the best exporter award many a time.

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PRINCIPLES FOR
food import, export inspection and certification

Section I - Introduction

1. Official and officially recognised inspection and certification systems are fundamentally important and very widely used means of food control; the following principles apply to such systems. The conference of consumers in the quality (including safety) of their food supply depends in part on their perception as to the effectiveness of food control measures. A substantial part of the worldwide trade in food, for example in meat and meat products, depends upon the use of inspection and certification systems. However, inspection and certification requirements may significantly impede international trade in foodstuffs. Consequently it is desirable that the design and application of these systems should reflect appropriate principles.

2. Inspection of food may occur at any stage in the production and distribution process. For some foods, inspection oversight of harvesting, processing, storage, transport, and other handling of product may be the most appropriate means of ensuring food safety. According to the methods of preservation used, it may be necessary to maintain inspection oversight on a continuous basis up to the time of retail sale. Inspection systems may be focused on the foodstuffs themselves, on the procedures and facilities employed in the production and distribution chain, on the substance and materials which can be incorporated into or contaminate foodstuffs.

3. Inspection should be carried out at the most appropriate stages (e.g. control of refrigeration at every stage of the cold chain). For some requirements, e.g. those pertaining to product description, it may be possible to limit inspection to the distribution process and prior to final sale.

4. In both design and use, food inspection and certification systems should be governed by a number of principles which will ensure an optimal outcome consistent with consumer protection and facilitation of trade.

Section 2 - Definitions

5. Audit is a systematic and functionally independent examination to determine whether activities and related results comply with planned objectives.

Certification is the procedure by which official certification bodies or officially recognised certification bodies provide written or equivalent assurance that foods or food control systems conform to requirements. Certification of food may be, as appropriate, based on a range of inspection activities which may include continuous online inspection, auditing of quality assurance systems, and examination of finished products.

Inspection is the examination of food or systems for control of food, raw materials, processing, and distribution including in-process and finished product testing, in order to verify that they conform to requirements.

Official inspection systems and official certification systems are systems administered by a government agency having jurisdiction empowered to perform a regulatory or enforcement function or both.

Officially recognised inspection systems and officially recognised certification systems are systems which have been formally approved or recognised by a government agency having jurisdiction.

Requirements are the criteria set down by the competent authorities relating to trade in foodstuffs covering the protection of public health, the protection of consumers and conditions of fair trading.

Risk assessment is the evaluation of the likelihood and severity of adverse effects on public health arising, for example, from the presence in foodstuffs of additives, contaminants, residues, toxins or disease-causing organisms.

Section 3 - Principles

6. Food inspection and certification systems should be used wherever appropriate to ensure that foods, and their production systems, meet requirements in order to protect consumers against food-borne hazards and deceptive marketing practices and to facilitate trade on the basis of accurate product description.

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With a booming market in seafood across the globe, Alsa Marine has responded suitably with collaborations and joint ventures.

Alsa Marine has state of the art cooking and freezing plants at Calcutta and Vizag and the plant at Chennai will be ready in six months. Leased plants at Bhubaneswar, Chennai and Cochin have also been upgraded. Alsa is on a list of USFDA and two of its factories are approved for EEC.

Equipped with state of the art facilities and a trained workforce, Alsa is poised to rapidly forge ahead into the future through a forceful expansion cum modernisation drive, at home and abroad. Alsa is recognised as a Trading House and is geared to attain Star Trading House status in the coming years.

Alsa Marine manages a 120 acre farm in Nellore, and is also an active participant in satellite farming. With a tie up with Biofeed Singapore, Alsa has brought in quality feed to the small and big farmers. Alsa Marine provides technology for different levels of culture activities; from the semi-intensive to extensive. Alsa Marine assists farmers in setting up of farms, right from selection of site to commercial operations and provides farm management assistance.

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Fitness for purpose

7. Inspection and certification systems should be fully effective in achieving their designated objectives having regard to the determination of the acceptable level of protection which is required.

Risk assessment

8. Inspection systems to ensure food safety should be designed and operated on the basis of objective risk assessment appropriate to the circumstances. Preferably the risk assessment methodology employed should be consistent with internationally accepted approaches. Risk assessment should be based on current available scientific evidence.

9. Inspection systems should be applied to particular commodities and processing methods in proportion to the assessed risks. In undertaking a risk assessment or in applying the principles of equivalence, importing countries should give due consideration to statements by exporting countries on a national or area basis of freedom from food-related disease.

Non-discrimination

10. Countries should ensure that they avoid arbitray or unjustifiable distinctions in the level of risk deemed to be appropriate in different circumstances so as to avoid discrimination or a disguised restriction on trade.

Efficiency

11. Inspection and certification systems should have adequate means to perform their task. In the choice of inspection and certification systems, there should be regard to costs to consumers and to the costs in money and time to the affected food industry and government consulting with interested bodies as appropriate. Such systems should be no more restrictive of trade than is necessary in order to achieve the required level of protection.

Harmonization

12. Member countries should use Codex standards, recommendations and guidelines (or those of other international organizations whose membership is open to all countries) whenever appropriate as elements of their inspection and certification systems. Countries should participate actively in the work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission and other relevant international bodies to promote and facilitate the development, adoption and review of Codex norms.

Equivalence

13. Countries should recognise that different inspection/certification systems may be capable of meeting the same objective, and are therefore equivalent. The obligation to demonstrate equivalence rests with the exporting country.

Transparency

14. While respecting legitimate concerns to preserve confidentiality, the principles and operations of food inspection and certification systems should be open to scrutiny by consumers and their representative organizations, and other interested parties.

15. Importing countries should provide information on existing requirements and proposed changes to requirements should be published and, except in the case of serious and immediate danger, an adequate time period permitted for comment. The views of exporting countries, and particularly those received from developing countries, should be taken into account in taking a final decision. A reasonable period should be allowed before a new requirement takes effect in order to permit exporting countries, and in particular developing countries, to make necessary changes to methods of production and control measures.

16. Importing countries should make available to the exporting countries, upon request, timely advice as to the basis of the decision they have taken regarding the compliance of foods with their relevant requirements.

17. Upon request by the competent authorities of the importing countries, the exporting countries should provide access to view and assess the actual working of their relevant inspection and certification systems.

Special and differential treatment

18. In the design and application of food inspection and certification systems, importing countries should take into account of the capabilities of developing countries to provide the necessary safeguards.

Control and inspection procedures

19. Importing countries should complete without undue delay any procedures necessary to assess compliance with requirements. Information requirements and any fees imposed by importing countries should be limited to what is reasonable and necessary.

Certification validity

20. Countries that certify exports of food and those importing countries which rely on export certificates should take measures to assure the validity of certification. Validation measures by exporting countries may include achieving confidence that official or officially recognized inspections systems have verified that the product or process referred to in the certificate conforms with requirements. Measures by importing countries may include point of entry inspection systems, audit of exporting inspection systems, and ensuring that certificates themselves are authentic and accurate.

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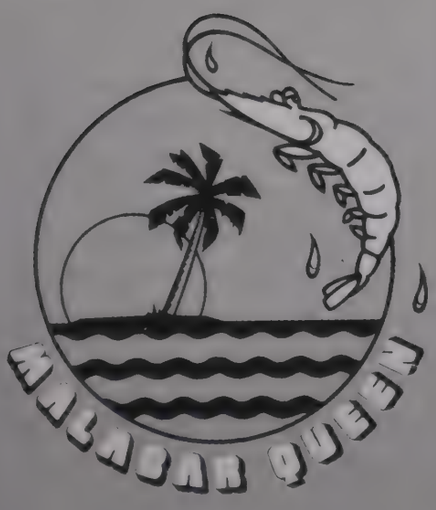
Processed in the ultra modern seafood factory of Integrated Rubian Exports Ltd. Using the latest state-of-the-art technology, adhering to stringent hygiene requirements.

Integrated Rubian Exports Ltd., - an ultra modern seafood processing unit with all round supremacy in Quality. In Technology. In Management. In Efficiency.



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Your Customers' health and safety are in your hands

It's your job to keep foodborne pathogens out of the seafood department

Michael Bavota

When shoppers walk down super market aisles, they're focused on grabbing what they need and getting home to feed their families. They are certainly not asking themselves, "Will I get sick from eating this food?"

Consumers trust that the nation's food handlers and manufacturers are doing everything to protect them from foodborne illnesses.

Yet the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention records more than 76 million cases of foodborne illnesses annually. Some 325,000 result in hospitalization, and 5,000 end in death.

You can protect your customers from foodborne illnesses by understanding the major causes of food poisoning and ensuring that both your suppliers and your staff follow safe handling procedures.

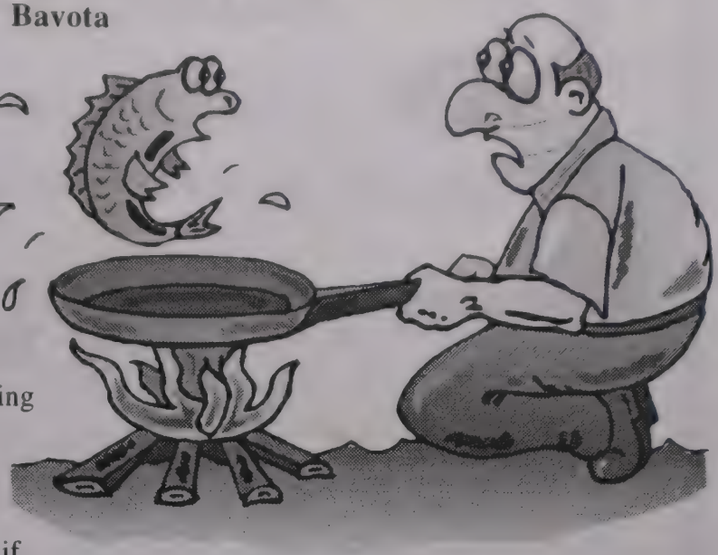
An overview of risk areas and the health threats they pose can help you keep seafood products safe.

Cross-contamination

Since most seafood departments are in or near the meat department, cross-contamination is a significant but highly avoidable health threat. It is critical that seafood, particularly ready-to-eat products, be processed in an area designated for seafood only, never near beef or pork.

The most dangerous pathogen in meat is E. Coli O157:H7. This infectious bacterium is found mostly in cow feces and exists in the intestines of bovines. About 73,000 cases of infections from E. Coli are reported each year, resulting in 61 deaths.

Cross-contamination is also the most common source of salmonella, a bacterium found mainly in the intestines of birds. If residue from raw poultry comes into contact with a cooked seafood product, it creates a potential food-poisoning situation.



In most cases, salmonella is killed during cooking. But if the pathogen is present in a food product that requires no further heating, the consumer could become ill.

For persons with compromised immune systems, salmonellosis can be life-threatening.

Poultry can also harbour the bacterium Campylobacter, the most commonly identified food-related cause of diarrhea in the world, according to the CDC. It exists in the intestines of healthy birds and is present on most raw poultry.

Cross-contamination of cooked seafood and poultry will very likely result in illness.

Personal hygiene

Calicivirus, a Norwalk-like virus, is the most common cause of food-borne illness but the least-readily diagnosed due to limited availability of laboratory tests. Calicivirus is usually spread from one infected person to another.

A worker can contaminate a salad or a sandwich simply by sneezing and then touching the food before washing his or her hands. According to the CDC, infected fishermen have contaminated oysters during harvest by touching the shells.

You can prevent this foodborne illness by requiring food handlers to wash hands often and use sanitizing hand dips frequently.

Safe handling

Listeria monocytogenes occurs worldwide in soil, vegetation, marine sediments and water. It causes listeriosis in humans, most commonly in the summer. Pregnant women, newborns and adults with weakened immune systems are primarily at risk. The bacterium can multiply even at low temperatures, so a small number of organisms may grow to an infectious dose even when food is properly refrigerated.

The greatest threat of listeriosis is from ready-to-eat products like seafood salad. Smoked fish is especially susceptible, but other seafoods that have tested positive for Listeria include raw fish, cooked crabs, raw and cooked shrimp and raw lobster.

If learning about these pathogens scares you, it should. It should make you want to do all you can to prevent them.

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Ministry of Commerce issues the final order on Maximum Residual Limits (MRL) for antibiotics

S.O. 792(E).- Whereas for the development of the export trade of India, certain proposals for amending the Order of the Government of India in the erstwhile Ministry of Commerce, number S.O. 729(E) dated the 21st August, 1995 relating to fresh, frozen and processed fish and fishery products were forwarded to the Export Inspection Council and published in Part II, Section 3, Subsection (ii) of the Gazette of India, Extraordinary, dated the 20th February, 2001 vide Order of the Government of India in the Ministry of Commerce and Industry (Department of Commerce), number S.O. 150(E), as required by sub-rule (2) of rule 11 of the Export (Quality Control and Inspection) Rules, 1964;

And whereas the objections and suggestions were invited from all persons likely to be affected thereby within a period of forty-five days of the date on which the copies of the Official Gazette containing the proposal were made available to the public;

And whereas the copies of the said Gazette were made available to the public on the 20th February 2001;

And whereas the objections and suggestions received from the public on the said draft have been considered by the Central Government;

Now, thereby, in exercise of the powers conferred by section 6 of the Export (Quality Control and Inspection) Act, 1963 (22 of 1963), the Central Government, after consulting the Export Inspection Council hereby makes the following amendment in the Order of the Government of India in the erstwhile Ministry of Commerce, No. S.O. 729(E), dated the 21st August, 1995 relating to fresh, frozen and processed fish and fishery products, which shall take effect on the date of its publication in the Official Gazette, namely:-

In the said Order, in Schedule I, after clause (d), the following shall be inserted namely:

"(e) Specifications for maximum residual limits (MRLs) for antibiotics, pesticides and heavy metals in fish and fishery products shall meet the requirements as given below:

Pesticides*

Serial number	Pesticides	Maximum permissible Residual level in ppm
1.	BHC	0.3
2.	Aldrin	0.3
3.	Dieldrin	0.3
4.	Endrin	0.3
5.	DDT	5.0

Antibiotics*

Serial number	Antibiotics	Maximum permissible Residual level in ppm
1.	Chloramphenicol	Nil
2.	Furazolidone	Nil
3.	Neomycin	Nil
4.	Tetracycline	0.1
5.	Oxytetracycline	0.1
6.	Trimethoprim	0.05
7.	Oxolinic acid	0.3
8.	Nalidixic acid	Nil
9.	Sulphamethoxazole	Nil

Heavy Metals*

Serial number	Heavy metals	Maximum permissible Residual level in ppm
1.	Mercury	1.0
2.	Cadmium	3.0
3.	Arsenic	75
4.	Lead	1.5
5.	Tin	250
6.	Nickel	80
7.	Chromium	12

*Note: * the residual limits are fixed based on the achievable levels in Indian conditions. However, for export to the European Union, USA and Japan, the residual levels fixed by individual countries for specified products are to be complied with".*

New Delhi, the 17th August, 2001

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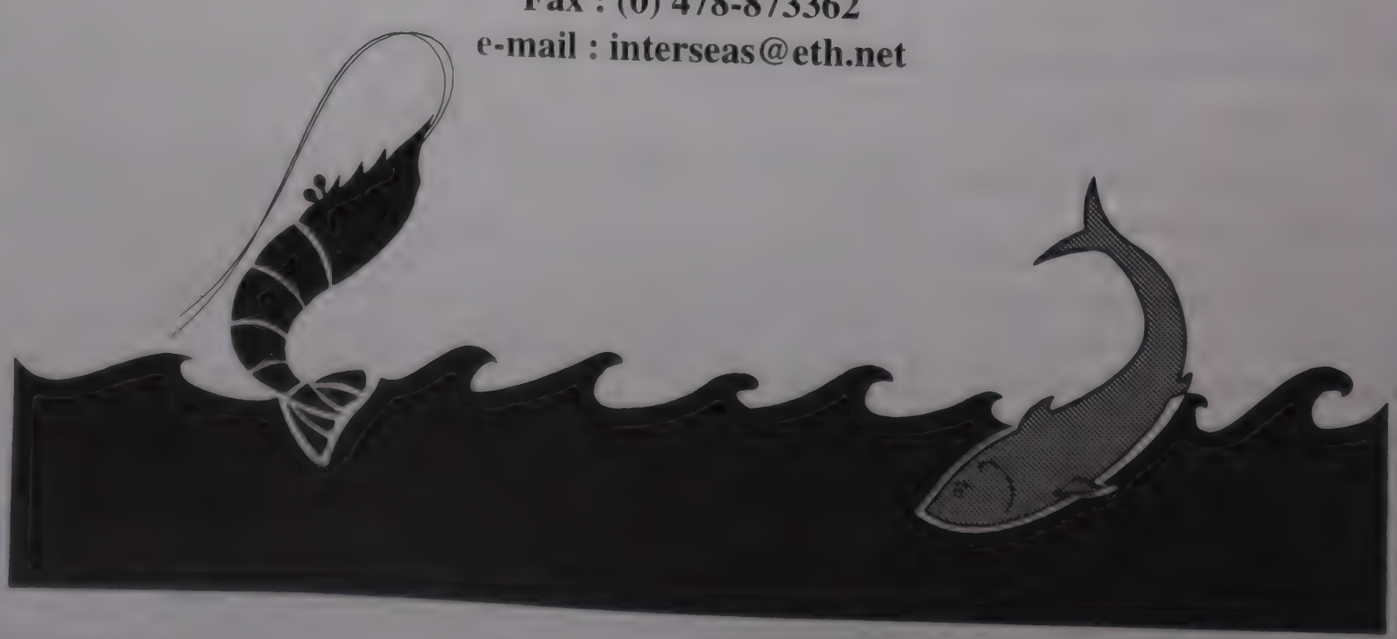

Cryopreservation of Fish Spermatozoa

S. Selvaraj and B. Ahilan*

Introduction

Cryopreservation is a branch of cryobiology, which relates to the long-term preservation and storage of biological material at very low temperature, usually at -196°C, the temperature of liquid Nitrogen. At this temperature cellular viability can be stored in a genetically stable form.

Asynchronisation of Gonadal maturation is one of the major constraints that impede fish breeding. To solve the asynchronisation of gonadal maturation, the preservation of gametes has emerged as a promising and a very useful technique to facilitate artificial breeding. Cryopreservation of Gametes is receiving increased attention in fish seed production, genetic management and conservation of aquatic resources. The term 'Gamete of Fishes' includes ova, spermatozoa and embryos.

The cryopreservation of fish ova and embryos is quite complicated when compared to fish spermatozoa. The reasons are i) Large egg volume ii) The presence of two different egg membranes and the different water permeability of each of the membranes iii) Sufficient degradation during cooling and iv) Presence of large volume of yolk.

Gamete Preservation Techniques

Gamete preservation can be done in two ways:

a) Short term preservation
b) Long term preservation (Cryopreservation)

The short term preservation is a technique in which the gametes are stored from a few hours to a few weeks in an unfrozen state whereas in the long term preservation technique the gametes are stored along with suitable extender medium and cryoprotectants for longer duration in a frozen state at a very low temperature (-196±1°C) which is known as Cryopreservation.

Methodology for Cryopreservation of Fish Spermatozoa

Preparation of diluent

The diluents preparation comprises of extender and cryoprotectant preparation.

Preparation of diluents (Extenders and Cryoprotectants)

↓

Collection of fish spermatozoa

Dilution of spermatozoa in extender and mixed with cryoprotectant

↓

Equilibration

↓

Ampouling

↓

Freezing

↓

Storing

↓

Thawing

a) Extender:

An extender is a hypertonic solution of inorganic and organic chemicals, resembling the ionic composition of blood or seminal plasma, in which the viability of spermatozoa can be maintained prior to freezing. The chemical formulations of the extenders used for cryopreserving spermatozoa vary widely depending upon physiological and chemical characteristics of sperm. Extenders also possess an property that it initiate motility of spermatozoa when diluted with water.

Wolf (1963) was the first person to develop an extender called Cortland medium, which is used for fish spermatozoa preservation. The other extenders which are commonly used includes NaCl medium, KCl and NaCl + KCl medium. The proteins rich medium like egg albumin and skimmed milk powder are widely used for the preservation of spermatozoa of freshwater fishes.

The chemical compositions of the extenders commonly used for cryopreservation are as follows:

b) Cryoprotectant:

Cryoprotectant is a chemical, which protect the cell from chilling injury during the course of freezing. The most widely used cryoprotectants are Glycerol. Dimethylsulfoxide (DMSO) and Methanol. The cryoprotectants themselves like extenders inhibit the sperm motility. Blaxter (1953) was the first

Sl. No.	Extenders	NaCl (in g/100 ml of distilled water)	KCl (in g/100 ml of distilled water)
1.	NaCl medium	899	-
2.	KCl medium	-	1147
3.	NaCl + KCl medium	449.5	573.5

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person to use glycerol as cryoprotectant.

The optimum concentration of cryoprotectant varies from 5 to 15% of the volume of diluents (extender + milt) depending upon species. The widely used cryoprotectants and their best concentrations are as follows:

Cryoprotectant	Best concentration (%)
Glycerol	10 - 20
Dimethylsulfoxide	10 - 15
Methanol	5 - 12.5

Collection of Fish Spermatozoa

The fish spermatozoa are collected from matured males either by stripping into a vial/syringe or by squashing the testis. Especially, it is collected from species with Asynchronous maturation habits. Immediately after collection the milt is kept in an insulated box with rice and moved to laboratory.

Dilution ratios

The ratio of diluent (Extender + Cryoprotectant) to spermatozoa varies from 1:1 to 10:1 and the mixing can be done at room temperature.

Equilibration

Equilibration is the time interval between mixing the milt in the diluent and putting the mixture into liquid nitrogen. It is mainly done to facilitate the penetration of cryprotectant into the cells. The longer the equilibrium time the lower the fertility.

Ampouling

The diluted samples within the equilibration period is filled in french straws (250 ml) and plugged with sealing powder. These are again stored under liquid nitrogen.

Freezing

The milt should be frozen immediately after collection. The freezing should be rapid so that thermal shock is minimal. This french straw filled with diluted sample is done freezing by manual vapourization over liquid nitrogen in thermocol chamber.

Storing

Liquid nitrogen (-196oC) is the most commonly used cryogen for storing fish spermatozoa. The freezed milt straws are immersed in Liquid nitrogen and kept without disturbing.

Thawing

Cooling and thawing rates are the most important factors affecting the success of cryopreservation. Fast thawing is more preferable than slow thawing because slow thawing can recrystallize the small intercellular crystals, which may damage the cells.

Fertilisation

Each french straws containing 250 ml thawed diluted milt is sufficient to fertilize 1-1.5 lakh of eggs. The thawed milt is mixed properly to the stripped eggs immediately and activated by a drop of water.

Role of Cryopreservation Techniques in Aquaculture

a) Wider distribution of gametes to hatcheries.

b) Conservation of Aquatic resources.

c) Hybridization and selective breeding programmes.

d) Study of Androgenesis.

e) Disease free status of parent fish can be maintained.

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WTO & Globalisation:

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the World Trade Organisation (WTO)?

An international body to supervise and encourage international trade. An International Trade Organization was proposed following the Bretton Woods conference in 1944, but was never set up; the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) was started instead. The GATT organized the Uruguay Round trade talks, which concluded in 1994 by setting up the World Trade Organisation (WTO) to take over its functions in encouraging multilateral trade in goods and services. The WTO began functioning on 1st January, 1995.

What is the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT)?

The General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) was a multinational treaty to liberalize world trade. It took effect on 1st January 1948, and ended when 117 member states signed the 'Uruguay Round' of negotiations in Marrakesh, Morocco, on 15th April 1994. GATT's administrative structure in Geneva, Switzerland, was succeeded by the WTO.

GATT established a code of conduct for international trade, based on the principle that trade should be conducted without discrimination, tariffs should be reduced through multilateral negotiations, and member countries should consult to overcome trade problems. GATT also established (1964) the International Trade Centre, operated jointly with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, to assist developing nations in promoting their exports.

Under GATT, a total of eight 'rounds' of trade negotiations brought about phased reductions in tariffs and other trade barriers. The prolonged eighth round began in September 1986 at Pant del Este, Uruguay. Participants agreed to expand the negotiations to include banking, investment, intellectual properties, and telecommunications. The talks were concluded in December 1993 and resulted in the furthest-reaching trade liberalization in history.

What are the main features of the WTO Agreement on Agriculture (AoA) which are of concern to India?

The main features of the WTO Agreement on Agriculture which are of concern to India are:

1) India has been maintaining Quantitative Restrictions (QRs) on import of 825 agricultural products as on 1st April 1997. Under the provisions of the Agreement, such QRs will have to be eliminated. India has sought to remove them in three phases within an overall time frame of six years up to 31st March 2001. These Quantitative Restrictions will have to be replaced with appropriate tariffs.

2) The Agreement also imposes constraints on the level of domestic support provided to the agricultural sector. In India's case, it may have in future some implications on minimum support prices given to farmers and on the subsidies given to farmers and on the subsidies given on agricultural inputs. However, the Agreement allows us to provide domestic support to the extent of 10% of the total value of agricultural produce.

3) Disciplines on export subsidy do not affect us as India is not providing any export subsidy on agricultural products.

4) The Agreement allows unlimited support to activities such as a) research, pest diseases control, training, extension, and advisory services; b) public stock holding for food security purposes; c) domestic food aid; and d) income insurance and food needs, relief from natural disasters and payments under the environmental assistance programmes. Moreover, investment subsidies given for development of agricultural infrastructure or any kind of support given to low income and resource poor farmers are exempt from any commitments. Most of our major rural and agricultural development programmes are covered under these provision.

What are Quantitative Restrictions?

Quantitative Restrictions (QRs) - are specific limits on the quantity or value of goods that can be imported or export during a specific time period. Quantitative Restrictions (QRs) are prohibited under GATT disciplines (Article XI), although exemptions are allowed under Articles XVIII, XX and XXI.

On how many agricultural items are Quantitative Restrictions (QRs) being maintained in India at present?

India has been maintaining Quantitative Restrictions (QRs) on imports of 825 agricultural products as on 1st

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April 1997. These Quantitative Restrictions are now being gradually removed. India has undertaken to remove Quantitative Restrictions on all products in three phases spread over six years upto 31st March 2003.

? *What are the safeguard measures that can be taken to protect the interests of our agricultural sector once QRs are phased out?*

India has already reserved the right to impose high levels of import duties of 100%, 150% and 300% on primary products, processed products and edible oils respectively. The Quantitative Restrictions can easily be replaced with high import tariffs in case there is need to restrict import of these commodities for ensuring welfare of our farmers. Therefore, ability to restrict import of any commodity is not constrained in any manner by the provisions of the Agreement.

? *What are the prospects and opportunities for increasing agricultural exports from India as a result of the WTO Agreement on Agriculture?*

It is expected that reduction in export subsidy and domestic support to the agricultural sector by the developed countries may lead to a decrease in production in those countries and therefore will give scope for expansion of exports from the developing countries. India, with its cheap labour, diverse agro-climatic conditions and large agricultural sector can definitely gain through expansion of international trade in agricultural products.

? *What is the Most-Favoured-Nation (MFN) status?*

The most-favoured-nation status is a provision in a commercial treaty that grants each signatory the automatic right to any tariff reduction that may be negotiated by one of them with a third country. For example, if the United States were to negotiate a tariff reduction on automobiles with Japan, it would also be committed to such reductions with all its other trading partners to whom it has granted the Most-Favoured-Nation status. All nations belonging to General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) have agreed to the most favoured-nation principle as a condition of membership.

? *What are Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) measures?*

A WTO member country may apply trade-restrictive measures for the protection of human life or its health and of plant or animal life or their health. The Uruguay Round has evolved a detailed discipline in this area which is contained in the Agreement on the Application Measures (Agreement on SPSM). SPS measures are those which are applied in order to:

i) protect (a) human life or health, or (b) animal life or health, from risks arising from : additives, contaminants, toxins or disease-causing organisms in foods, beverages or foodstuffs,

ii) protect (a) animal life or health, or (b) plant life or health, from risks arising from : the entry, establishment or spread of pests, diseases, disease-carrying organisms or disease-causing organisms;

iii) protect human life or health from the risks arising from : diseases carried by animals, plants or their products, or the entry, establishment or spread of pests;

iv) prevent or limit other damage from : the entry, establishment or spread of pests.

? *What are Green Box policies?*

Green box policies is the term that describes domestic support policies that are not subject to reduction commitments under the Agreement on Agriculture (AoA). These policies are assumed to affect trade minimally, and include support such as research, extension, food security stocks, disaster payments and structural adjustment programmes.

? *What are Blue Box policies?*

The Blue Box policies (measures) refer to direct payments to producers like decoupled income support : payments not linked to production, structural adjustment assistance provided through investment aids to compensate for the structural disadvantage, through resource retirement programmes, through producer retirement programmes, government financial participation in income insurance and income safety-net programmes. These shall relate solely to income and not to either the level of production or to prices, domestic or international.

? *What is the Cairns group?*

It is the group of "free trading" agricultural exporting nations which met in 1987 in Cairns, Australia, and agreed to present their common interests and concerns in the agricultural negotiations of the Uruguay Round. Currently, its membership comprises Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Fiji, Hungary, Indonesia, Malaysia, New Zealand, Philippines, Thailand and Uruguay. It has emerged as a major negotiating group for agricultural trade negotiations and accounts for around 20% of world agricultural exports.

? *What is Dumping?*

Selling goods in a foreign country at a price which local producers regard as unfairly low. this may mean selling at less than the long-run average costs of production plus transport costs; charging a lower price in export markets than is charged for comparable goods in home markets; or simply selling at a price with which producers in the importing country cannot compete. Anti-

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dumping duties are tariffs imposed in response to alleged dumping.

? *What is Anti Dumping? What is its purpose in International Trade?*

Dumping is said to occur when goods are exported by a country to another country at a price lower than its normal value. This is an unfair trade practice which can have a distortive effect on international trade. Anti-Dumping is a measure to rectify the situation arising out of the dumping of goods and its trade distortive effect. Thus, the purpose of Anti-Dumping duty is to rectify the trade distortive effect of dumping and re-establish fair trade. The use of Anti-Dumping measure as an instrument of fair competition is permitted by the WTO. In fact, Anti-Dumping is an instrument for ensuring fair trade and is not a measure of protection per se for the domestic industry. It provides relief to the domestic industry against the injury caused by dumping.

? *What is Aggregate measure of Support (AMS)?*

This is a means of quantifying the aggregate value of domestic support or subsidy given to each category of agricultural products. Each WTO member country has made calculations to determine its AMS level wherever applicable. AMS consists of two parts-product-specific and non-product-specific.

? *What is the significance of Anti-Dumping measures in India in the context of lifting of Quantitative Restrictions (QRs)?*

India is currently in the process of phasing out its Quantitative Restrictions regime in relation to imports. With the removal of licensing restrictions on imports, there has been a tendency on the part of several trading partners of India to resort to dumping of their goods of different kinds into India, thereby creating a situation of unfair competition in the domestic market whereby the domestic industry has suffered injury. To address such a scenario of unfair trade, and to provide the requisite remedy to the domestic industry / producer against injury caused by such Dumping, the Anti-Dumping measures have assumed a great deal of significance. The paramount objective of the multi-lateral trade regime of WTO is to establish free and fair international trade. With removal of QRs, India has moved towards the regime of free trade. At the same time, Anti-Dumping measures can be applied, where warranted, in the interest of fair trade.

? *What is Tariff?*

A Tariff (or duty) is a tax levied on imports and, less often, on exports as they cross the borders into other countries. A specific Tariff is imposed on each unit of an imported good; ad valorem tariff is levied as a percentage on the price of the good to the importer. Both modes result in higher prices to domestic purchasers as the duty is passed forward on resale.

? *What is Quota?'*

A Quota, in international trade is a type of trade barrier that nations place on the physical amount of imports or exports of specific kinds of goods. A Quota differs from a Tariff, which is a schedule of taxes or duties placed on imports that does not categorically place limitations on the amount of the goods that may be imported. Both Tariffs and Quotas are seen as detrimental to the concept of free trade, and the GATT works to reduce such trade barriers.

? *What is Tariff Quota?*

Tariff Quota: A Quota that allows for import of a commodity at less than the general applied rate. (e.g., if a country applies a General Tariff of 100% on a particular commodity and then allows a limited quantity, say 20,000 tonnes, to be imported at a lower rate of say, for 20%).

? *Is India being marginalised in the globalised world?*

Globalisation is an unavoidable process which is taking place independent of us. It forces us to cope with it. There is no room in a globalised world for an economy delinked from world trade and foreign investment. The truth is that if we do not reform rapidly, and position ourselves to compete, we will be marginalised. There is no divine dispensation that gives India alone the power to survive and prosper as an isolationist island in the globalised world.

? *Is it beneficial for India to become a member of the WTO?*

Fast growing countries all over the world have opened up their economics and integrated with world trade. They have learnt to compete in world markets and to open up their markets to import competition. The World Trade Organisation is an international organisation that supervises the rule by which sovereign independent nations trade with each other. These are rules that are established by negotiation. Membership of WTO imposes certain obligations on all of us but it also provides us protection against unfair practices, particularly from the richer countries. In the absence of some international rules of the game, we would be even more at the mercy of the rich. The value of being a member of the WTO is best seen in the for reaching concessions.

? *Will subsidies being given to farmers be reduced?*

There is no obligation on India under GATT or WTO to remove or

reduce subsidies given to Indian Agriculture. This is because the total Aggregate Measure of Support (AMS) to farmers, namely subsidies on fertiliser, electricity, seeds, pesticides and the cost of credit, as well as support provided by the Minimum Support Price (MSP) is well below the ceiling prescribed by the agreement. An obligation to reduce subsidies applies only to developing countries provided the subsidy exceeds 10 per cent of the value of the total agricultural produce. In the case of India the value of agricultural support is quite low.

? *How will the Agreement help in boosting agricultural exports?*

The Uruguay Round Agreement has created excellent opportunities for Indian agricultural exports. This is because international trade in agriculture so far was distorted by heavy subsidies given by developed industrial countries. Under the Agreement these countries are committed to decrease subsidies and improve market access. The decrease in subsidies will also raise the price of their products. India, therefore, will benefit both from increased access and from the higher prices that its produce will fetch in those markets. India can at any stage implement protective Tariffs or Anti-Dumping provisions to protect farmers once the WTO regime comes into force.

? *Does the Agreement interfere in any way with India's ability to follow its own agricultural policies?*

India's development schemes are exempt from the preview of disciplines in the Agreement. It will in no manner affect India's freedom and flexibility to follow its own policies.

? *Does market access have to be given for agricultural products from abroad, thereby ruining the Indian farmer?*

India has neither provided, nor is required to provide minimum market access opportunities till the Balance of Payment (BoP) situation is positive. Minimum market access opportunities have to be established by those countries which maintain QRs for reasons that are inconsistent with the Agreement. The level of protective Tariffs which India can impose when the BoP improves and the country is required to provide minimum market access, will be 100 per cent on primary products, 150 per cent on processed foods and 300 per cent on edible oils.

? *What is Balance of Payment?*

The Balance of Payments of a country refers to the balance between the payments that are owed to the outside world and that are owed by outsiders to the country. It is a recording of the value of transactions across borders and comparison of into-the-country transactions with outgoings. A table can be drawn to judge the Balance of Payments of a country. One column of the table will show the credit side, i.e. the incoming foreign exchange. It will include payments for goods and service exported to other countries, foreign corporations bringing money to invest, loans etc. The second column will show the foreign exchange going out, the debit side. It will include the payments for imports, payment of loans or interest on loans, profits of foreign companies sent back to their parent countries and so on. In fact, all these categories can be further broken down in more detail. For example, one can put different types of exports and imports in detail.

Reading the Balance of Payments table gives an idea of what it is that is contributing to a nation's capacity to earn foreign exchange and what constitutes a drain on foreign exchange.

? *What is the TRIPS Agreement?*

The Agreement on Trade Related aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) is a part of the Uruguay Round. Agreement which led to the establishment of the WTO. India ratified the WTO Agreement on 30th December, 1994 and the Agreement came into force from 1st January, 1995. The TRIPS Agreement covers seven categories of intellectual property namely : Copyright and related Rights; Trademarks; Geographical indications; Industrial designs; Integrated circuits; Trade Secrets and Patents (which includes plant varieties). The TRIPS Agreement, inter-alia, prescribes the minimum standards to be adopted by members in respect of the above categories of intellectual property.

Continued from page 17

the Association. We also wish to thank all members for their wholehearted support and contribution.

We thank all the Regional Presidents and all the office bearers of the regions for their effective participation and support in the activities of the Association.

Last but not the least, the effort of every one of us should be to have an Association which is not only democratic in its approach, but offers scope for an effective leadership towards guiding this industry to new heights not only in terms of increasing export figures, but also towards stability and consolidation of every member of this industry, which ultimately would offer continuous growth to this industry with a solid foundation, resulting in the much-needed contribution to the nations effort of increasing its income and resultant prosperity.

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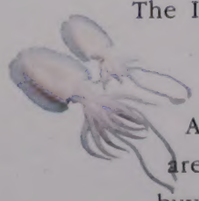

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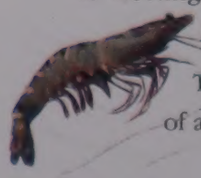

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